

MONDAY REPORT

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SHELTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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SHELTON'S 15TH STREET CAMPUS CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

When the Fifteenth Street Campus of Shelton State Community College celebrates its 40th anniversary on November 14, former students and faculty along with local dignitaries and current personnel will gather to recognize the founding of Shelton's oldest campus. In 1953 the school first opened its doors as the J. P. Shelton Trade School with a total of 300 students and 16 faculty members. Today, Shelton State is one of the largest two year colleges in the state with enrollment peaking around 7000 students.

J. P. Shelton was a large man who moved to Tuscaloosa County with his family around 1914. He liked to sing, and his deep bass voice was often heard leading congregations in "Amazing Grace" at local churches.

A. K. (Temo) Callahan and Shelton was close friends and worked together in the Alabama Legislature. "J. P. Shelton was the only man in the world who didn't go to school past the fourth grade and yet, ended up having a school named for him. He was a smart man but never had the educational opportunities. Everything he learned came through reading," Callahan said. "He really had a resounding voice," Callahan said. "I saw him actually pass a bill one time in the legislature without ever getting out of his chair." A lawyer and a populist, Shelton served in the Alabama Legislature from 1945 until his death in 1954. In 1947 the Alabama Legislature passed the Regional Vocational and Trade School Act, which established the first four regional trade schools in the state of Alabama. "Big Jim" Folsom was governor at the time.

"A young legislator, former governor George Wallace introduced this bill in the House and was responsible for its passage. Today, Wallace is remembered as the "Father of the Two Year College System" in the state. According to Callahan, however, the afternoon before the bill was introduced, a conversation occurred between Shelton, Wallace, and Callahan. "Shelton said these trade schools could be financed with a small tax on whiskey. Wallace did not say anything but the next morning, he introduced the bill himself on the floor of the House," said Callahan. During Shelton's last term in office, he served on the Ways and Means Committee of the house and worked to get one of the state trade schools located in Tuscaloosa.

According to Callahan, he and Shelton traveled the state talking to members of the State Board of Education, the group who would decide where the new trade school would be located. "We lobbied the Board for Tuscaloosa and even went to the governor," said Callahan. Three locations were being considered, Birmingham, Mobile, and Tuscaloosa. The first two were voted down by the Board. However, we had done our homework well, and when Tuscaloosa was nominated as the site for the trade school, it was approved by the State Board." With Tuscaloosa as the home of the new trade school, land was purchased and a school built at the site of Shelton's present Fifteenth Street Campus.

Harold I. James was appointed to head the new school in June of 1951. A native of Buffalo, New York, James had moved to Birmingham in 1950, met his future wife, and married. James had seen some of the trade schools in New York State and was impressed with this new concept of vocational training. He and his new wife moved to Tuscaloosa in 1951 as he assumed the presidency of this new school. Mr. James is no longer in good health. However, Mrs. James taught math at the new school and remembers much about Shelton's early days. "Classes began in 1953 and we had a lot of World War II veterans as well as younger students," Mrs. James said. The school was like a family.

Everyone was concerned about the students and the quality of training they were receiving. We realized we were offering something new in the state, vocational education, and it was important that we do a good job.

The first program to open was the cabinet shop. It was in this program that desks, chairs, filing cabinets were made for the school. Many of these items are still in use today. "We depended on the college advisory committee and the employment agency to help us develop our curriculum. We were preparing students so they would do well in work," said Mrs. James.

Later the school was renamed the Shelton State Technical Institute and eventually the name was changed to Shelton State Technical College. In 1979, the campus was merged with was was once the Tuscaloosa campus of Brewer State Junior College in Fayette. The new college was Shelton State Community College and the campus became known as the Shelton State Technical Division. Leo Sumner, who was then president of Shelton State Technical College was named president of the new institution.

The institution grew to almost 4,000 students during the 1980's. Yet the two divisions, Technical and Junior College, remained separate in every sense, joined together only by a common president and business manager. When Tom Umphrey assumed the presidency upon Sumner's retirement in December 1988, many changes began to occur. By 1990, all barriers separating the college were removed and the institution truly became a comprehensive community college. Yet, Shelton State Community College remained the only two year college in the state that had never had a new campus. The Skyland Campus was housed in an old discount department store building, and the Fifteenth Street Campus remained in the building constructed in 1953. When the college received the money to buy the land necessary for a new campus in 1991, a new era began for Shelton State. This fall, Dr. Umphrey announced that the Fifteenth Street property had been sold and that it would be vacated within two years. Current plans call for construction to begin in 1994.

SHELTON TO OFFER TWO NEW CLASSES

Plumbing Code Class and Common Home Plumbing and Heating Repairs will be offered Spring Semester. The Plumbing Code Class will prepare individuals for the Block Plumbing Exam administered by the State of Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board and will introduce students to the regulations and mechanical requirements of the current issue of the Standard Plumbing Code. This course includes extensive code review, mathematics necessary for mechanical computation, and blue print review and will offer practical test-taking tips. The common Home Plumbing and Heating Repairs course will provide instruction in the repair and preventative maintenance of common plumbing fixtures, plumbing for persons with no experience in plumbing. Timely maintenance tips will be discussed. Repair of sinks, lavatories, commodes, tubs, garbage disposal, ice makers, forced-air heating systems and water heaters will be stressed. This course does not include unstopping of building sewers or the cleaning of septic tanks. For more information on either of these classes, call Donna Ussery at 391-2434.

SHELTON SINGERS TO PERFORM FORM MONDAY CONCERT SERIES

Monday, November 8, the Shelton Singers will present a concert of sacred choral music at 1:00 p.m. in the choral room as part of the regular Monday concert series. The concert will include music from the Renaissance through the Twentieth Century.

The Shelton Singers have already presented a community concert of sacred music at the First Methodist Church of Greensboro. They will be singing at the Centreville Baptist church on November 14th at 7:00 p.m. and at Five Points Baptist church in Northport on November 21st at 7:00 p.m.

Glinda Blackshear directs the 40-voice concert choir, and Becki Stallsmith is the accompanist.

PHI THETA KAPPA SAYS THANKS!

Phi Theta Kappa would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time and those who donated at our Blood Drive on October 26th. The Red Cross collected 24 pints of blood from 29 participants. If you were unable to donate blood due to class or work conflicts, please stop by the Tuscaloosa Red Cross collection office on Bryant Drive across from the DCH medical towers and behind the Exxon Station. Collection hours are Monday through Friday from 12 noon to 7 p.m.